



Floating world of the Urus



BOUNTIFUL AND BUOYANT, totora reeds from Titicaca's shallows supply the Urus with material for homes and boats. Reeds even provide the "ground" these fisherfolk walk on, since they live on floating islands (above). As bottom layers rot, the Indians spread new layers on top.

Seated on the spongy surface (left), an Uru woman grinds barley for making gruel or mush.

Like the Aymaras, the Urus (below) use totora (below). Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl theorizes that the Indians learned the art from ancient seafarers who crossed the Pacific on papyrus. Aymaras from the Titicaca region construct a seagoing reed boat (see the January 1971 C